

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TAIPEI PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 173881

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

EXDIS - FOR AMBASSADOR UNGER FROM GLEYSTEN

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PFOR, CH, TW, US

SUBJECT: TAIWAN STRAITS MILITARY BUILDUP

REFS: A.STATE 167149,B. TAIPEI 4627

1. YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT THE INFORMATION MENTIONED IN REF A ALMOST RESULTED IN A HIGH LEVEL INSTRUCTION TO YOU TO RAP THE GROC'S KNUCKLES FOR NOT HAVING PROVIDED BALANCED INFORMATION ABOUT THE SHELLING OFF LITTLE CHINMEN ON JULY 3. INSTRUCTION WAS NOT SENT IN PART BECAUSE OF THE SUBSEQUENT QUESTIONING ABOUT THE RELIABILITY OF THE REPORT THAT THE ROC INITIATED JULY 3 FIRING.

2. IN VIEW OF THE SKETCHY NATURE OF OUR INFORMATION ABOUT PAST ROC FIRINGS ON THE ISLAND, YOU SHOULD NOT REPEAT NOT MAKE A REPRESENTATION TO THE GROC ON THIS MATTER BUT YOU MAY WISH TO CONSIDER WAYS OF INFORMALLY CONVEYING TO APPROPRIATE CIVILIAN AND MILITARY OFFICIALS THE IMPORTANCE OF

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PROVIDING US WITH THE MOST BALANCED INFORMATION AVAILABLE

WHEN DISCUSSING ISSUES WHICH COULD BE CAUSE FOR ALARM. SPECIFICALLY, THE INFORMATION ADMIRAL SUNG AND OTHER MILITARY OFFICIALS FINALLY PROVIDED US SHOULD HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO OUR ATTENTION PROMPTLY BECAUSE IT WAS OF SUCH OBVIOUS IMPORTANCE IN ASSESSING PRC INTENTIONS.

3. WE APPRECIATED YOUR ASSESSMENT CONTAINED IN REF B AND WILL SHORTLY BE SENDING YOU AN EA/INR ANALYSIS. ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT FLATLY RULE OUT A MOVE AGAINST PRATAS, WE THINK THERE IS ONLY A REMOTE CHANCE THAT CURRENT PRC MILITARY OPERATIONS FORESHADOW A SERIOUS ATTACK ON THE OFFSHORE ISLANDS. WE ARE INCLINED TO VIEW THEM AS MILITARY EXERCISE ACTIVITY INVOLVING INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS AS WELL AS A PSYCHOLOGICAL ELEMENT AGAINST THE ROC. ALTHOUGH THE SITUATION SEEMS LESS ALARMIST THAN A FEW DAYS AGO, WE ARE CONTINUING TO WATCH IT CAREFULLY. MOREOVER, THE BUILDUP OF PRC MILITARY CAPABILITIES IN THE TAIWAN STRAITS -- WHATEVER THE REASONS FOR CURRENT OPERATIONS -- INCREASES THE RISK OF A MILITARY INCIDENT WHICH WOULD BE MOST UNHELPFUL. WE AGREE WITH YOU THAT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE GROC SEEM TO SHARE THIS VIEW. KISSINGER

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